

## ... And the Envelope, Please?

You have an outstanding résumé and a GPA that is off the charts, plus you're drop-dead gorgeous – all the ingredients that will allow you to walk into any position you want. The human resource department and all the staff will welcome you with open arms, right? Maybe you should take another look at what it takes to be selected for your dream job. All of those attributes are a great beginning, but you'll need to present yourself well in an interview for most jobs.

An interview begins before the interview. Careful preparation is the key. Take a look at what else an applicant needs to do to get the best offer.

- Do your homework. Learn all you can about the company or organization.
- Know exactly where you need to be and how you'll get there, including where you will park if you drive. Try out your plan at least one day before your appointment.
- Arrive 5-15 minutes early. Allow time for unexpected delays.
- Be prepared with extra résumé copies, notepad and pen.
- Plan what you will wear. That means that you're dressing for the interview, not the position. Some experts say to dress slightly above the standard expected for the position you hope will be yours. How you look has everything to do with the first impression you make. You probably have about 30 seconds to make that impression. Look for more details on page 128 of the *Idaho Career Planning Guide*.
- Have references available. Ask for permission before you provide a name.
- Practice using good manners and behavior you will use so that it will come naturally.

Make eye contact.

Speak with an appropriate voice – not too loud and not too soft.

Smile.

Shake hands confidently but not aggressively.

Although you may not be ready for an interview now, when you are you'll be glad that you paid some attention to the issues. Use this project as a way to think about how some of those issues come into play. Begin by reading each of the following three vignettes and the Job Interview Scoring Guide. Pay special attention to the process that you will use to score each of the applicants. Discuss your results and ideas before writing a recommendation. If you recommend selecting an applicant whose score isn't the highest, be ready to justify your reasons.

### **Applicant 1:**

Thomas Allen Fitzpatrick III came with multiple copies of his résumé, wearing a shirt stained with coffee and a little perspiration because he was nervous. He adjusted his tie and straightened his jacket as he walked confidently into the conference room.

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After he sat down, he immediately had an opportunity to tell what he wanted about himself. He said that he was born and raised in Chicago. "My mother still lives there, and I think I would like this job because it's the sort of thing I'm looking to do. I'd like to work here and make money doing sales. I'm a people person, and I like interacting with people. I sold stereo equipment before, and I know that I could really contribute to your company selling ... you know ... your product."

One of the interview panel asked him what exactly he knew about the company and the product. Thomas said, "I know that you make and sell motors for oil drilling machines. And it's something I'd like to do."

The interview team thanked him for coming in and told him they would have a decision within the next week.

### **Applicant 2:**

Salleigh Winston rushed into the reception area 15 minutes after her interview was scheduled. She apologized to the waiting group and explained that there was an accident that had delayed traffic. Although she knew that her hair and makeup needed attention, she felt that it was better not to make the interview panel wait longer.

When she was asked to tell about herself, she said that because her father was in the military, she had lived all over the United States and in Germany and Japan. "I speak four languages and spent a great deal of time working with large property owners in Oklahoma, Texas and western Kansas in my last work assignment.

"The reason I'd like to work with your company is because, even though it's small, it's one of the fastest-growing companies in what is becoming a very important niche. Last year alone, your sales to large property owners with oil wells on their land showed an increase of 15 percent. I think that's just the beginning. I believe I can use my already-established relationships to help you take your motors to the masses and make them the number one oil pump motor in the United States."

The panel was impressed with the fact that she had done her homework and invited her to describe more details about her ideas for a sales strategy. She left copies of her résumé, carefully organized in blue presentation folders with the cover sheet visible under the clear plastic cover. They shook hands all around. Salleigh left, stopped at a coffee shop to write notes to say thank you to each person on the panel and dropped them in a mail box on her way home.

### **Applicant 3:**

Nancy Torne-Pantz sat in the quiet reception area whispering her power words to herself and waited to be called into the conference room. She knew she wasn't the most qualified for the job, but as far as she was concerned, her experience with cattle on her

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parents' ranch in Texas made her an authority on four things: land, cattle, oil wells and what makes people tick.

She was smoothing the skirt of her tailored silk suit when the receptionist told her that the interview panel was ready for her.

As she walked into the room, she said, "Hi. I'm Nancy Torne-Pantz, and you don't need to bother looking any further. I'm the woman for the job. Now I know I'm not the most qualified person for the job, but let me tell you that I can do it. I know I can. I'm from Texas. I know the land. I know the people, and I know about oil wells. It makes sense then that I know about oil pump motors."

Nancy then told the group that she would leave her résumé, but warned them that her previous experience was not related to this position. She felt that it wouldn't matter because she was obviously so well-suited for the job.

## ✓ JOB INTERVIEW SCORING GUIDE

Name of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

### Areas for Consideration

### *Needs*

### *Improvement*

### *Adequate*

### *Superior*

### *Responsibility*

Comes late with  
no résumé  
or references.

Comes on time  
with résumé.

Comes early  
with résumé.

### *Preparation*

Has no information  
about the company  
or the position.

Has some idea  
of what the  
company does.

Has read and  
reflected on  
company; can  
respond to questions  
with relevant ideas.

### *Appearance*

No attention  
to dress  
or grooming.

Dress is  
appropriate;  
grooming is  
lacking.

Dress and  
grooming  
are appropriate.

### *Attitude*

Passive and  
detached.

Interested but not  
focused on issues  
that matter.

Interested in the  
position and focused  
on relevant issues.

### *Responses*

Yes and no  
or short answers.

Well-crafted  
responses that  
sound rehearsed.

Listens, reflects on the  
question and responds  
with confidence;  
substantial ideas.

### Scoring Process

For each applicant, circle the level in each area that most closely describes the applicant. Using the following numerical rating, total the points for each. Superior = 3; Adequate = 2; Needs Improvement = 1. Use the results to write your recommendation for which applicant to hire. Justify your choice by referring to both the numerical results and relevant details from the applicant's description.